



Type: Book Chapter

Many Duties of Man

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Source: *Gospel Doctrine: Selections from the Sermons and Writings of Joseph F. Smith*

Published: Salt Lake City; The Deseret News, 1919

Pages: 312-340

Abstract: The Object of Man's Existence—We Deal with the Lord—Necessity for All to Accomplish their Missions—God Honors Those Who Honor Him—Qualifications of Latter-day Saints—Perfection in Our Sphere—Let Every Man Live to Bear Closest Inspection—Need of Individual Responsibility—Conquer Ourselves First—Let Us Conquer Ourselves—Charity the Greatest Principle—Look for Good; Not for Evil—Estimate Men by their Noble Deeds—Let Us Sustain One Another—Do Not Bear Malice Against One Another—Honor Yourself and Your Neighbors—Avoid Courts—Let Us Live Our Religion—Let Us Be True to the Faith—Church Duties are Paramount—We Should Study the Gospel—Encourage Singing—Cultivate Singing—Be Free From Debt—What the Lord Requires of His Saints—Cultivate Gratitude—Back-biting—Do Not Inflict Wounds, But Heal Wounds—Use Good Language—Do Not Destroy Life Wantonly—Commencement Address—Our Main Purpose of Life—How to Love Your Neighbor—Question of Church Leaders—The Sin of Ingratitude

CHAPTER XV

Many Duties of Man

THE OBJECT OF MAN'S EXISTENCE. The object of our being here is to do the will of the Father as it is done in heaven, to work righteousness in the earth, to subdue wickedness and put it under our feet, to conquer sin and the adversary of our souls, to rise above the imperfections and weaknesses of poor, fallen humanity, by the inspiration of Almighty God and his power made manifest, and thus become indeed the saints and servants of the Lord in the earth.—*Apr. C. R.*, 1902, p. 85.

WE DEAL WITH THE LORD. We are dealing with our faith and consciences, you are dealing not with me, not with the Presidency of the Church, but with the Lord. I am not dealing with men respecting my tithing, my dealings are with the Lord; that is, with reference to my own conduct in the Church as a tithe-payer, and with reference to my observance of the other laws and rules of the Church; if I fail to observe the laws of the Church, I am responsible to my God, and will have to answer to him, by and by, for my neglect of duty, and I may have to answer to the Church for my fellowship. If I do my duty, according to my understanding of the requirements that the Lord has made of me, then I ought to have a conscience void of offense; I ought to have satisfaction in my soul, in the consciousness that I have simply done my duty as I understand it, and I will risk the consequences. With me it is a matter between me and the Lord; so it is with every one of us.—*Apr. C. R.*, 1911, p. 6.

NECESSITY FOR ALL TO ACCOMPLISH THEIR MISSIONS. He that sent his Only Begotten Son into the world to accomplish the mission which he did, also sent every soul within the sound of my voice, and indeed every man and woman in the world, to accomplish a mission, and that mission can-

not be accomplished by neglect ; nor by indifference ; nor can it be accomplished in ignorance. We must learn our duty ; learn the requirements that the Lord has made at our hands, and understand the responsibilities that he has placed upon us. We should learn the obligation that we are under to God and to each other, and that we are under also to the cause of Zion, that has been restored to the earth in the latter days. These things are essential, and we cannot prosper in spiritual things, we cannot grow in knowledge and understanding, our minds cannot expand in the knowledge of God, nor in wisdom, nor in the gifts of the Holy Spirit, without we devote our thoughts and our efforts toward our own betterment, toward the increase of our own wisdom, and knowledge in the things of God.

We labor day by day for the bread that perishes, and we devote but a few hours, comparatively, in seeking to obtain the bread of life. Our thoughts, in great measure, are placed upon worldly things, the things that perish, and therefore we are prone to neglect the higher duties that devolve upon us as the children of our father, and to forget, in some measure, the greater obligations that rest upon us. It is therefore proper, and indeed it becomes the duty of those who are placed upon the towers as watchmen in Zion to exhort the people to diligence, to prayerfulness, to humility, to a love of the truth that has been revealed to them, and to earnest devotion to the work of the Lord, which is intended for their individual salvation, and so far as they have influence upon others, the salvation of those whom they may have power to influence to move in the right direction ; not that I can save any man, nor that any one man can save any other man or fit him for exaltation in the kingdom of God. This is not given to me to do for others, nor is it given to any man to be a Savior in this sense, or in this way, to his fellow man ; but men can set an example ; men can urge the precepts of the gospel. Men can proclaim the

truth to others, and can point out the way to them in which to walk, and if they will harken to their counsel, listen to their admonitions and be led by them, they themselves will seek the path of life and they will walk in it, and obtain their exaltation for themselves. And thus the work required of us by the Lord is an individual work, it devolves upon each individual alike. No man can be saved in the kingdom of God in sin. No man will ever be forgiven of his sins by the just Judge, except he repent of his sins. No man will ever be freed from the power of death unless he is born again as the Lord Almighty has decreed, and declared to the world by the mouth of his Son in the meridian of time, and as he has declared it again in this dispensation through the Prophet Joseph Smith. Men can only be saved and exalted in the kingdom of God in righteousness, therefore we must repent of our sins, and walk in the light as Christ is in the light, that his blood may cleanse us from all sins, and that we may have fellowship with God and receive of his glory and exaltation.—*Oct. C. R.*, 1907, p. 4.

GOD HONORS THOSE WHO HONOR HIM. Though the Lord should try me by withholding his blessings from me, and making me to drink to the very dregs the bitter cup of poverty, that should make no difference to me. The point is, what is the law of God? And if I know that law, it is my duty to obey it, though I suffer death in consequence. Many a man has gone to the stake in obedience, as he believed, to the commandments of God. Not one of the ancient disciples who were chosen of Jesus Christ, escaped martyrdom, except Judas and John. Judas betrayed the Lord, and then sacrificed his own life; and John received the promise of the Lord that he should live until he came again to the earth. All the others were put to death, some crucified, some dragged in the streets of Rome, some thrown from pinnacles, and some stoned to death. What for? For obeying the law of God and bearing testimony to that which they knew to be

true. So may it be today. But let the spirit of this gospel be so imbedded in my soul that though I go through poverty, through tribulation, through persecution, or to death, let me and my house serve God and keep his laws. However, the promise is that you shall be blessed through obedience. God will honor those who honor him, and will remember those who remember him. He will uphold and sustain all those who sustain truth and are faithful to it. God help us, therefore, to be faithful to the truth, now and forever.—*Apr. C. R.*, 1900, pp. 49, 50.

QUALIFICATIONS OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS. Now we all need patience, forbearance, forgiveness, humility, charity, love unfeigned, devotion to the truth, abhorrence of sin and wickedness, rebellion and disobedience to the requirements of the gospel. These are the qualifications requisite to Latter-day Saints and to becoming Latter-day Saints and members in good standing in the Church of Jesus Christ and heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ. No member in good standing in the Church will be drunken or riotous or profane or will take advantage of his brother or his neighbor or will violate the principles of virtue and honor and righteousness. No member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in good standing will ever be chargeable with such offenses as these, because members will avoid these evils, and they will live above them. Then we have a mission in the world: each man, each woman, each child, who has grown to understanding or to the years of accountability, ought to be an example to the world. They ought not only to be qualified to preach the truth, to bear testimony of the truth, but ought to live so that the very life they live, the very words they speak, their every action in life will be a sermon to the unwary and to the ignorant, teaching them goodness, purity, uprightness, faith in God and love for the human family.—*Apr. C. R.*, 1916, pp. 6, 7.

PERFECTION IN OUR SPHERE. I sincerely hope that the

spirit of the conference will abide with us, will go with us to our homes, and that we will be able to continue to build on the foundations of the gospel of the Son of God until we become perfect, even as our Father in heaven is perfect, according to the sphere and intelligence that we act in and possess. I do not expect that any of us will ever become in mortality quite so perfect as God is perfect; but in the spheres in which we are called to act, and according to the capacity and breadth of intelligence that we possess, in our sphere and in the exercise of the talent, the ability, and intelligence that God has given to us, we may become as perfect in our sphere as God is perfect in his higher and more exalted sphere. I believe that.—*Apr. C. R.*, 1915, p. 140.

LET EVERY MAN LIVE TO BEAR CLOSEST INSPECTION. Let every man's life be so that his character will bear the closest inspection, and that it may be seen as an open book, so that he will have nothing to shrink from or be ashamed of. Let all men who are elevated to positions of trust in the Church live so that no man can point to their faults, because they will have no faults; so that no man can justly accuse them of wrongdoing, because they do no wrong; that no man can point out their defects as "human" and as "weak mortals," because they are living up to the principles of the gospel, and are not merely "weak human creatures," devoid of the Spirit of God and the power to live above sin. That is the way for all men to live in the kingdom of God.—*Oct. C. R.*, 1906, pp. 9, 10.

NEED OF INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY. It is not safe for men or women to conclude that because they have fulfilled carefully their public responsibilities they have done all that is required of them. Public requirements are changeable. Public demands vary with the times. Sometimes they are strict and sometimes they are very lax. Public sentiment becomes fickle, and it is often indifferent to the conduct of individuals who take license from a public indifference to wrong

doing. Individual responsibility is more concerned with the duties which men owe to their God whose requirements are positive and constant. When men feel that they are ever under an All-seeing Eye, their conduct is measured in the strictest terms. They are not subject to lapses of public sentiment.

The first and highest standard of correct living is to be found in that individual responsibility which keeps men good for the truth's sake. It is not difficult for men who are true to themselves to be true to others. Men who honor God in their private lives do not need the restraint of public opinion which may not only be indifferent, but positively wrong. It is by the individual responsibilities which men feel that they are able to place themselves on the right side of all public questions. Those who neglect the inner life are dependent upon public guidance which leads them into all sorts of inconsistencies.

To walk safely and steadfastly without leaning upon the arm of flesh is the individual duty of every Latter-day Saint. Such a duty becomes a responsibility which men owe to themselves and to their God. The Saints should study their responsibilities, both public and individual, and find out, if they can, just what they are.—*Juvenile Instructor*, December, 1909, Vol. 44, p. 519.

CONQUER OURSELVES FIRST. I feel very grateful for the excellent peace and spirit which has pervaded all our meetings. It is true, we are all engaged in a warfare, and all of us should be valiant warriors in the cause in which we are engaged. Our first enemy we will find within ourselves. It is a good thing to overcome that enemy first and bring ourselves into subjection to the will of the Father, and into strict obedience to the principles of life and salvation which he has given to the world for the salvation of men. When we shall have conquered ourselves, it will be well for us to wage our war without, against false teachings,

false doctrines, false customs, habits and ways, against error, unbelief, the follies of the world that are so prevalent, and against infidelity, and false science, under the name of science, and every other thing that strikes at the foundations of the principles set forth in the doctrine of Christ for the redemption of men and the salvation of their souls—*Oct. C. R.*, 1914, p. 128.

LET US CONQUER OURSELVES. Let us conquer ourselves, and then go to and conquer all the evil that we see around us, as far as we possibly can. And we will do it without using violence; we will do it without interfering with the agency of men or of women. We will do it by persuasion, by long-suffering, by patience, and by forgiveness and love unfeigned, by which we will win the hearts, the affections and the souls of the children of men to the truth, as God has revealed it to us. We will never have peace, nor justice, nor truth, until we look to the only true fountain for it, and receive from the fountainhead.—*Oct. C. R.*, 1906, p. 129.

CHARITY THE GREATEST PRINCIPLE. Charity, or love, is the greatest principle in existence. If we can lend a helping hand to the oppressed, if we can aid those who are despondent and in sorrow, if we can uplift and ameliorate the condition of mankind, it is our mission to do it, it is an essential part of our religion to do it.—*Apr. C. R.*, 1918, p. 4.

LOOK FOR GOOD; NOT FOR EVIL. Change the focus of your view, and of your eye, from watching for evil to watching for that which is good, that which is pure, and leading and prompting those who err into that path which has no error in it, and that will not admit of mistakes. Look for good in men, and where they fail to possess it, try to build it up in them; try to increase the good in them; look for the good; build up the good; sustain the good; and speak as little about the evil as you possibly can. It does not do any good to magnify evil, to publish evil, or to promulgate

it by tongue or pen. There is no good to be obtained by it. It is better to bury the evil and magnify the good, and prompt all men to forsake evil and learn to do good; and let our mission be to save mankind and to teach and guide in the path of righteousness, and not to sit as judges and pass judgment upon evil-doers, but rather to be saviors of men.—*Apr. C. R.*, 1913, p. 8.

ESTIMATE MEN BY THEIR NOBLE DEEDS One fruitful source of apostasy from the Church comes from an inclination on the part of those who apostatize to consider the small, mostly unintentionally committed errors of its officers, rather than the broader and more important labors which enter into their experience. Young men so inclined turn from the infinite truth of the gospel, and the mighty plan of salvation, the eternal purposes of God, to carp and cavil upon the insignificant actions and the imperfect achievements of men, judging the inspiring magnitude of the former by the disagreeable and tiresome detail of the latter. Many of the serious annoyances of communal life among the Saints would be obliterated entirely if men would search for the great and noble aspirations actuating their neighbors, rather than for the imperfect sidelights that lay bare their puny shortcomings. Those who wish to advance in the world will avoid soul-destroying, mind-narrowing thoughts, and devote the days allotted to them, which it will be found are none too numerous, in studying the greater, nobler, and grander subjects that tend to build character, provide happiness, and create harmony with the mighty purposes of the Church and its founder, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let us estimate our brethren by their best desires and noblest aspirations, not by their trifling shortcomings and failures. We estimate the majesty of the Wasatch by Monte Christo, Baldy, Observatory, the mighty Cottonwoods, Clayton, Timpanogos, and Nebo—its loftiest peaks—not by its rolling elevations or hillocky spurs, rocks ravines or tri-

fling canyons. So also let us judge our fellows, and so the Church. It is the better way.—*Improvement Era*, March, 1902, Vol. 5, p. 388.

LET US SUSTAIN ONE ANOTHER. Let us sustain Christ, his people, and his cause of righteousness and redemption; let us sustain one another in the right, and kindly admonish one another in regard to wrongdoing, that we may be friends and saviors on Mount Zion, one for another, and that we may help the weak and strengthen them, encourage the doubtful and bring light to their right understandings as far as it is possible, that we may be instrumental in the hands of God of being saviors among men. Not that we have power to save men. We have not; but we have power to show them how they can obtain salvation through obedience to the laws of God. We can show them how to walk in order to be saved, for we have the right to do that, we have knowledge and understanding as to how to do it, and it is our privilege to teach it and to enforce it by example as well as by precept among our associates wherever we are in the world.—*Oct. C. R.*, 1907, pp. 9, 10.

DO NOT BEAR MALICE AGAINST ONE ANOTHER. Brethren and sisters, we want you to be united. We hope and pray that you will go from this conference to your homes feeling in your hearts and from the depths of your soul to forgive one another, and never from this time forth to bear malice towards another fellow-creature. I do not care whether he is a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints or not, whether he is a friend or a foe, whether he is good or bad. It is extremely hurtful for any man holding the priesthood, and enjoying the gift of the Holy Ghost to harbor a spirit of envy, or malice, or retaliation, or intolerance toward or against his fellow-men. We ought to say in our hearts, let God judge between me and thee, but as for me, I will forgive. I want to say to you that Latter-day Saints who harbor a feeling of unforgive-

ness in their souls are more guilty and more censurable than the one who has sinned against them. Go home and dismiss envy and hatred from your hearts; dismiss the feeling of unforgiveness; and cultivate in your souls that spirit of Christ which cried out upon the cross, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." This is the spirit that Latter-day Saints ought to possess all the day long. The man who has that spirit in his heart and keeps it there will never have any trouble with his neighbor; he will never have any difficulties to bring before the bishop, nor high council; but he will always be at peace with himself, at peace with his neighbors, and at peace with God. It is a good thing to be at peace with God.—*Oct. C. R.*, 1902, pp. 86, 87.

HONOR YOURSELVES AND YOUR NEIGHBORS. We admonish, we beseech our brothers and sisters, in the gospel of Jesus Christ, not only to honor themselves by a proper course of living, but also to honor and love and be charitable to their neighbors, every one of them. We admonish you not only to keep the greatest of all the commandments that has ever been given of God to man, to love the Lord your God, with all your heart, and mind, and strength, but we exhort you also to observe that second law, next unto it, to love your neighbors as yourselves; return good for evil, do not revile others because you are or may be reviled. We have no need to tear down the houses of other people (using this expression as a symbol). We are perfectly willing that they should live in the homes they have erected for themselves, and we will try to show them a better way. While we will not condemn that which they love and cherish above all other things in the world, we will endeavor to show them a better way and build them a better house, and then invite them kindly, in the spirit of Christ, of true Christianity, to enter the better dwelling. That is the principle, and I wish to impress it upon you this morning. I desire to impress, if I can, upon the minds of the parents the necessity of prop-

erly instructing and teaching their children with reference to this glorious principle, charity and love, that love for our neighbor that will enable us to cherish his rights as sacredly as we cherish our own, to defend the rights and liberties, put up the fallen bars in the fences of our neighbors that are carelessly left down, just as we would put our own bars up surrounding our own fields, in order to protect our crops from the ravages of stray animals.—*Ap. C. R.*, 1917, p. 4.

AVOID COURTS. Be reconciled to each other. Do not go to the courts of the Church nor to the courts of the land for litigation. Settle your own troubles and difficulties; and, as Bishop Hunter used to say, which is an axiom that cannot be disputed, there is only one way in which a difficulty existing between man and man can be truly settled, and that is when they get together and settle it between them. The courts cannot settle troubles between me and my brother.—*Oct. C. R.*, 1916, pp. 6, 7.

LET US LIVE OUR RELIGION. I will say now to all of the Latter-day Saints, Let us live our religion; let us pay our tithing and be blessed; let us remember the poor and the needy, and sustain and help them; let us visit the sick and afflicted, and administer consolation unto them; let us help the weak; let us do all in our power to build up Zion, to establish righteousness in the earth, and to plant in the hearts of the people the glorious truth that Jesus is the Christ, the Redeemer of the world, that Joseph Smith is a prophet of the living God, whom the Lord raised up in these last days to réstore the everlasting gospel and the power of the holy priesthood to the world.—*Oct. C. R.*, 1902, p. 88.

LET US BE TRUE TO THE FAITH. We should set an example; we should be true to the faith, as Brother Stephens sings to us; true to the faith! We should be true to our covenants, true to our God, and true to one another, and to the interests of Zion, no matter what the consequences may be, no matter what may result. I can tell you that the man

who is not true to Zion and to the interests of the people will be the man who will be found, bye and bye, left out and in a pitiable spiritual condition. The man who stays with the kingdom of God, the man who is true to this people, the man who keeps himself pure and unspotted from the world, is the man that God will accept, that God will uphold, that he will sustain, and that will prosper in the land, whether he be in the enjoyment of his liberty or be confined in prison cells, it makes no difference where he is, he will come out all right.—*Oct. C. R.*, 1906, p. 9.

CHURCH DUTIES ARE PARAMOUNT. Our duties in the Church should be, I think, paramount to every other interest in the world. It is true that we are under the necessity of looking after our worldly interests. It is, of course, necessary for us to labor with our hands, and our minds, in our various occupations for obtaining the necessaries of life. It is essential that the Latter-day Saints should be industrious and persevering in all the labors that devolve upon them, for it is written that “the inhabitants of Zion shall remember their labors, inasmuch as they are appointed to labor, in all faithfulness; for the idler shall be had in remembrance before the Lord.” Again it is written: “Let every man be diligent in all things. And the idler shall not have place in the Church, except he repents and mends his ways.” Again: “Thou shalt not be idle; for he that is idle shall not eat the bread nor wear the garments of the laborer.” But in all our labors in life, in all the cares that beset us, and the temporal responsibilities that rest upon us, we should put uppermost in our thoughts, and highest in our appreciation and love, the cause of Zion, which is indeed the cause of truth and righteousness.—*Oct. C. R.*, 1907, p. 2. See *Doc. and Cov.* 42:42; 68:30; 75:29.

WE SHOULD STUDY THE GOSPEL. I believe it is good to seek knowledge out of the best books, to learn the histories of nations, to be able to comprehend the purposes of

God with reference to the nations of the earth; and I believe that one of the most important things, and perhaps more important to us than studying the history of the world, is that we study and become thoroughly acquainted with the principles of the gospel, that they may be established in our hearts and souls, above all other things, to qualify us to go out into the world to preach and teach them. We may know all about the philosophy of the ages and the history of the nations of the earth; we may study the wisdom and knowledge of man and get all the information that we can acquire in a lifetime of research and study, but all of it put together will never qualify any one to become a minister of the gospel unless he has the knowledge and spirit of the first principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ.—*Apr. C. R.*, 1915, p. 138.

ENCOURAGE SINGING. It delights my heart to see our little children learning to sing, and to see the people, our people everywhere, improving their talents as good singers. Everywhere we go among our people, we find sweet voices and talent for music. I believe that this is a manifestation to us of the purpose of the Lord in this direction toward our people, that they will excel in these things, as they should excel in every other good thing.—*Apr. C. R.*, Sunday School, 1904, p. 81.

CULTIVATE SINGING. I can remember when I was a little boy, hearing my father sing. I do not know how much of a singer he was, for at that time I was not capable of judging as to the quality of his singing, but the hymns he sang became familiar to me, even in the days of my childhood. I believe that I can sing them still, although I am not much of a singer. When young men go out into the world to preach the gospel, they will find it very beneficial for them to know how to sing the songs of Zion. I repeat the admonition and request made by Brother McMurrin, who

has recently returned from a lengthy mission to Europe, that the young men who are eligible to preach the gospel, and who are likely to be called into the missionary field, begin at once to improve their talent to sing, and do not think it is beneath their dignity to join the choirs of the wards in which they live and learn how to sing. When we listen to this choir, under the leadership of Brother Stephens, we listen to music, and music is truth. Good music is gracious praise of God. It is delightful to the ear, and it is one of our most acceptable methods of worshiping God. And those who sing in this choir and in all the choirs of the Saints, should sing with the spirit and with the understanding. They should not sing merely because it is a profession, or because they have a good voice; but they should sing also because they have the spirit of it and can enter into the spirit of prayer and praise to God who gave them their sweet voices. My soul is always lifted up, and my spirit cheered and comforted, when I hear good music. I rejoice in it very much indeed.—*Oct. C. R.*, 1899, pp. 68, 69.

BE FREE FROM DEBT. One of these subjects is, that in the time of prosperity, which we are now enjoying, it is highly proper for the Latter-day Saints to get out of debt. I have unceasingly urged this thought upon the brethren for the past year or more. Wherever I have had the opportunity of speaking, I have scarcely ever forgotten to hold out to the people the necessity—that I feel, at least—of our settling our obligations and freeing ourselves from debt in the day of prosperity. Our experience in the years that have passed must have led us to the conclusion that we have periods of prosperity, followed by periods of depression. We have now had a long period of success and prosperity, and we may expect, almost at any time, to see these conditions change and a time of depression spread over the land and over the people. I would say, in connection with this subject, that one of the best ways that I know of to pay my

obligations to my brother, my neighbor, or business associate, is for me first to pay my obligations to the Lord. I can pay more of my debts to my neighbors, if I have contracted them, after I have met my honest obligations with the Lord, than I can by neglecting the latter; and you can do the same. If you desire to prosper, and to be free men and women and a free people, first meet your just obligations to God, and then meet your obligations to your fellowmen. Bishop Hunter used to put the matter in these words: "Brethren, pay your tithing and be blessed," and that is just what I mean.—*Apr. C. R.*, 1903, p. 2.

WHAT THE LORD REQUIRES OF HIS SAINTS. There is a circumstance recorded in the Scriptures, that has been brought forcibly to my mind while listening to the remarks of the elders who have spoken to us during conference. A young man came to Jesus and asked what good thing he should do that he might have eternal life. Jesus said unto him, "Keep the commandments." The young man asked which of them. Then Jesus enumerated to him some of the commandments that he was to keep—he should not murder, nor commit adultery, nor steal, nor bear false witness, but he should honor his father and mother, and love his neighbor as himself, etc. Said the young man, "All these I have kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?" Jesus said, "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me." And we are told that he turned away sorrowful, because he had great possessions. He would not hearken to, nor obey the law of God in this matter. Not that Jesus required of the young man to go and sell all that he possessed and give it away; that is not the principle involved. The great principle involved is that which the elders of Israel are endeavoring to enforce upon the minds of the Latter-day Saints today. When the young man turned away in sorrow, Jesus said to his disciples, "A rich man

shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven." (See Matt. 19:16-23.)

Is this because the rich man is rich? No. May not the rich man, who has the light of God in his heart, who possesses the principle and spirit of truth, and who understands the principle of God's government and law in the world, enter into the kingdom of heaven as easily, and be as acceptable there as the poor man may? Precisely. God is not a respecter of persons. The rich man may enter into the kingdom of heaven as freely as the poor, if he will bring his heart and affections into subjection to the law of God and to the principle of truth; if he will place his affections upon God, his heart upon the truth, and his soul upon the accomplishment of God's purposes, and not fix his affections and his hopes upon the things of the world. Here is the difficulty, and this was the difficulty with the young man. He had great possessions, and he preferred to rely upon his wealth rather than forsake all and follow Christ. If he had possessed the spirit of truth in his heart to have known the will of God, and to have loved the Lord with all his heart and his neighbor as himself, he would have said to the Lord, "Yea, Lord, I will do as you require, I will go and sell all that I have, and give it to the poor." If he had had it in his heart to do this, that alone might have been sufficient, and the demand would probably have stopped there; for undoubtedly the Lord did not deem it essential for him to go and give his riches away, or to sell his possessions and give the proceeds away, in order that he might be perfect, for that, in a measure, would have been improvident. Yet, if it had required all this to test him and to prove him, to see whether he loved the Lord with all his heart, mind, and strength, and his neighbor as himself, then he ought to have been willing to do it; and if he had been, he would have lacked nothing, and would have received the gift of eternal life, which is the greatest gift of God, and which can be received on no

other principle than the one mentioned by Jesus to the young man. If you will read the sixth lecture on faith, in the book of Doctrine and Covenants, you will learn that no man can obtain the gift of eternal life unless he is willing to sacrifice all earthly things in order to obtain it. We cannot do this so long as our affections are fixed upon the world.

It is true that we are in a measure of the earth, earthy; we belong to the world. Our affections and our souls are here; our treasures are here, and where the treasure is there the heart is. But if we will lay up our treasures in heaven; if we will wean our affections from the things of this world, and say to the Lord our God, "Father, not my will, but thine be done," then may the will of God be done on earth as it is done in heaven, and the kingdom of God in its power and glory will be established upon the earth. Sin and Satan will be bound and banished from the earth, and not until we attain to this condition of mind and faith will this be done.

. Then let the Saints unite; let them hearken to the voices of the servants of God that are sounded in their ears; let them hearken to their counsels and give heed to the truth; let them seek their own salvation, for, so far as I am concerned, I am so selfish that I am seeking after my salvation, and I know that I can find it only in obedience to the laws of God, in keeping the commandments, in performing works of righteousness, following in the footsteps of our file leader, Jesus the Exemplar and the Head of all. He is the way of life, he is the Light of the world, he is the Door by which we must enter, in order that we may have a place with him in the celestial kingdom of God.—*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 18, 1877, pp. 133-135; *Oct. C. R.*, 1875.

CULTIVATE GRATITUDE. We are almost daily put under obligations to one another, especially to friends and acquaintances, and the sense of obligation creates within us feelings of thankfulness and appreciation which we call gratitude. The spirit of gratitude is always pleasant and satis-

fyng because it carries with it a sense of helpfulness to others; it begets love and friendship, and engenders divine influence. Gratitude is said to be the memory of the heart.

And where there is an absence of gratitude, either to God or man, there is the presence of vanity and the spirit of self-sufficiency. Speaking of Israel, Paul says: "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened" (Rom. 1:21).

Thomas Gibbons expresses in verse most beautifully the idea of ingratitude:

"That man may last, but never lives,
Who much receives, but nothing gives;
Whom none can love, whom none can thank,
Creation's blot, creation's blank."

Naturally people feel grateful to those who have done them a kindness, and the feeling of gratitude is generally a sufficient compensation for those who have done a kind and unselfish act. But when one does a favor for another, and behind that favor is the secret and selfish intent that the gratitude which is awakened by the favor shall become a debt which the receiver at some time and in some way must repay to the selfish needs of the one who bestowed the favor, then gratitude becomes a debt which it is expected will be paid.

An act of apparent kindness can never result in good when it is intended to put any man under obligations that deprive him of his freedom to act. That is the characteristic of a politician. It is buying up one's freedom, and such a bargain is worse upon the man who seeks to make it than Shylock's contract for a pound of flesh.

When we win the friendship of others, because that friendship is helpful and encouraging to us, and because we need it for our happiness in life, gratitude of others toward

us has a beautiful and lasting charm. That is the gratitude which Saints enjoy.

It is always safer and better to enjoy the gratitude which we feel to others than to set store upon the gratitude which we think others should have toward us. The grateful man sees so much in the world to be thankful for, and with him the good outweighs the evil. Love overpowers jealousy, and light drives darkness out of his life. Pride destroys our gratitude and sets up selfishness in its place. How much happier we are in the presence of a grateful and loving soul, and how careful we should be to cultivate, through the medium of a prayerful life, a thankful attitude toward God and man!—*Juvenile Instructor*, Vol. 38, April, 1903, pp. 242, 243.

BACKBITING. In a letter recently received by me, the following request and question were submitted for my opinion: "I would like you to define backbiting. There seems to be a difference of opinion respecting the meaning of the term. Some claim that so long as you speak the truth about a person, it is not backbiting, no matter what you say or how you say it. Would it not be better if we knew a person had faults, to go to him privately and labor with him, than to go to others and speak of his faults?"

Nothing could be farther from the spirit and genius of the gospel than to suppose that we are always justified in speaking the truth about a person, however harmful the truth to him may be. The gospel teaches us the fundamental principle of repentance, and we have no right to discredit a man in the estimation of his fellow-men when he has truly repented and God has forgiven him. We are constantly beset by temptation, and often say and do things of which we immediately repent, and no doubt, if our repentance is genuine, it is always acceptable to our heavenly Father. After he has accepted the contrition of the human heart and forgiven men their trespasses, it is dangerous for

us to hold up their evil deeds for the contempt of the world.

As a rule, it is not necessary to be constantly offering advice to those who in our judgment are possessed of some fault. In the first place, our judgments may be in error; and in the second place, we may be dealing with a man who is strongly imbued with the spirit of repentance, and who, conscious of his weakness, is constantly struggling to overcome it. The utmost care, therefore, should be observed in all our language that implies a reproach of others. As a general rule, backbiting is better determined by the spirit and purpose that actuate us in speaking of things we consider faults in others than in the words themselves. A man or woman who possesses the Spirit of God will soon detect in his or her own feelings the spirit of backbiting, as that spirit is present in the remarks that are made concerning others. The question of backbiting, therefore, is probably best determined by the ancient rule, "That the letter killeth and the spirit giveth life."—*Juvenile Instructor*, October 15, 1904, Vol. 39, p. 625.

DO NOT INFLICT WOUNDS, BUT HEAL WOUNDS. Almost anyone can inflict a wound. It may be made by a word, a slight, or by general conduct. But the healing of a wound is an art not acquired by practice alone, but by the loving tenderness that comes from universal good will and a sympathetic interest in the welfare and happiness of others. If people were always as ready to administer kindness as they are indifferent to the pain of others—if they were as patient to heal as they are quick to wound—many an unkind word would never be spoken, many a slight would be avoided. The art of healing is really one of the highest qualities and attributes of man; it is a characteristic of a great and noble soul; the sure indication of generous impulse.

In the discipline of the home, of the school, and social life, the infliction of wounds may be unavoidable, if they be

not an actual necessity; but wounds should never be left open to fester—they should be bound up and cared for until they are healed. Perhaps the most perfect ideal in the art of healing is the mother whose tender and gracious love asserts itself in taking away the sting of a deserved or undeserved punishment. How her love heals every wound! How quick her caresses bind up and soothe! The example of her life is the wisdom which love teaches. In the school, children may suffer humiliation into which their wayward or careless conduct has brought them, and their punishment may be just; but their wounds the teacher should never leave unhealed. Nature wounds us when we violate her laws; but nature has her antiseptic methods of treating and healing every wound. The wise teacher has his also.

The cultivation of kindly thoughts and sentiments towards others is always helpful in the art of healing. It is sometimes helpful to lift ourselves out of our own shells in which, by our surroundings and habits of thought, we are incrustated, and place ourselves in the positions which others occupy in life. Constant consideration for the welfare and happiness of others is every day imposed upon us by the divine injunction, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

The test, then, of our soul's greatness is rather to be sought in our ability to comfort and console, our ability to help others, rather than in our ability to help ourselves and crowd others down in the struggle of life. If the reader will stop a moment to reflect upon the healing qualities of Christ's life, he will understand that Christ was a Master in the art of healing, not alone of the wounds he made, but of self-inflicted wounds and the wounds that others made. What a comfort his life is to those in sorrow! How instinctively our thoughts turn to him! How prone we are to go to him for consolation! He is truly the great Healer of the afflictions of others.—*Juvenile Instructor*, March, 1903, Vol. 38, pp. 178, 179.

USE GOOD LANGUAGE. Language, like thought, makes its impression and is recalled by the memory in a way that may be unpleasant if not harmful to those who have been compelled to listen to unseemly words. Thoughts that in themselves are not improper may be exalted or debased by the language used to express them. If inelegant expressions should be eschewed, what shall be said of profanity?—*Juvenile Instructor*, May 1, 1906, Vol. 41, p. 272.

DO NOT DESTROY LIFE WANTONLY. I have just a few words to say in addition to those that have already been said, in relation to shedding blood and to the destruction of life. I think that every soul should be impressed by the sentiments that have been expressed here this evening by all who have spoken, and not less with reference to the killing of our innocent birds, natives of our country, who live upon the vermin that are indeed enemies to the farmer and to mankind. It is not only wicked to destroy them, it is abominable, in my opinion. I think that this principle should extend, not only to the bird life, but to the life of all animals. When I visited, a few years ago, the Yellowstone National Park, and saw in the streams and the beautiful lakes, birds swimming quite fearless of man, allowing passers-by to approach them as closely almost as tame birds, and apprehending no fear of them, and when I saw droves of beautiful deer herding along the side of the road, as fearless of the presence of men as any domestic animal, it filled my heart with a degree of peace and joy that seemed to be almost a foretaste of that period hoped for when there shall be none to hurt and none to molest in all the land, especially among all the inhabitants of Zion. These same birds, if they were to visit other regions, inhabited by man, would, on account of their tameness, doubtless become more easily a prey to the gunner. The same may be said of those beautiful creatures—the deer and antelope. If they should wander out of the park, beyond the protection that is established there for these ani-

mals, they would become, of course, an easy prey to those who were seeking their lives. I never could see why a man should be imbued with a blood-thirsty desire to kill and destroy animal life. I have known men—and they still exist among us—who enjoy what is, to them, the “sport” of hunting birds and slaying them by the hundreds, and who will come in after a day’s sport, boasting of how many harmless birds they have had the skill to slaughter, and day after day, during the season when it is lawful for men to hunt and kill (the birds having had a season of protection and not apprehending danger) go out by scores or hundreds, and you may hear their guns early in the morning on the day of the opening, as if great armies had met in battle; and the terrible work of slaughtering the innocent birds goes on.

I do not believe any man should kill animals or birds unless he needs them for food, and then he should not kill innocent little birds that are not intended for food for man. I think it is wicked for men to thirst in their souls to kill almost everything which possesses animal life. It is wrong, and I have been surprised at prominent men whom I have seen whose very souls seemed to be athirst for the shedding of animal blood. They go off hunting deer, antelope, elk, anything they can find, and what for? “Just for the fun of it!” Not that they are hungry and need the flesh of their prey, but just because they love to shoot and to destroy life. I am a firm believer, with reference to these things, in the simple words of one of the poets:

“Take not away the life you cannot give,

For all things have an equal right to live.”

—*Juvenile Instructor*, April, 1913, Vol. 48, pp. 308-309.

COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS. The point which seems the most perspicuous, and which will appear with greatest force to your minds, no doubt, on this occasion, is that it should have a speedy ending. Not so, however, with the efforts of those students who graduate with honors from this college,

today. Before them lies a strange, meandering, endless path, by them as yet untrodden, however well beaten by the weary feet of pilgrims who have passed over to the great beyond. This path is fraught with all there is in life, of good or ill to them. They are entering upon the great problem of life, and each will be compelled to solve that problem for himself. The problem of death—which is spiritual midnight—the unenlightened soul—will solve itself. As the stream flows naturally down the slope to the dead waters of our inland sea, so is the common trend of the natural man down to the dark valley of the shadows of death. He needs to make no effort to reach this goal; by lazily floating on the tide of common events, he will reach it all too soon. But, to the fountain of life, to the summit of existence, to the fulness of moral, religious and intellectual manhood, the finger board of truth points eternally up the stream. To reach this glorious fountain, to scale this magnificent height, one must work; he must stem the current, must climb the hill—must climb and work and persevere. Thus he will succeed.

It is a very important thing to make a commencement in life. It is no less important to make that commencement upon a sound and proper footing. A man going to the summit of Twin Peaks, which tower towards the heavens on the southeast of us, will have a long, weary journey before he reaches his destination. Although not far away at first, if he starts off toward the northwest, the longer he continues in that direction the further he goes from his objective point. True, he may circumscribe the earth and, if he keep the proper bearings, will come back to the point at last. But eternity is a wondrous globe to circumnavigate, and we will find it to our advantage not to undertake the feat when we can so easily avoid it by commencing as we should. Error is a worthless and an injurious thing. To avoid it should always be our careful study. Mistakes, if they are indeed mistakes, are never fortunate, and may be extremely painful

and hard to rectify. But the sooner rectified the better. It is braver and more honorable to promptly disavow and fly from error, no matter what the present seeming cost, or to frankly acknowledge a mistake, and apologize for it, and thus get rid of it, than to crouch beneath the burden, which is moral cowardice.

The students now graduating from this school in the branches of education which they have taken, are ready to commence the application of the knowledge they have acquired to the practical duties of life. You may apply this knowledge to the development of the natural resources and prosperity of our country, or to the betterment of the social problems of the times in which you live, or you may apply it to the further intellectual development of yourselves and others. That which you have gained by study and the assistance of your teachers should be wisely used by you as an aid to the attainment of other and greater knowledge.

Whatever may be your course in the future, or your choice of occupation, always remember the grand scriptural injunction: "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest." (Ec. 9:10.) This scripture applies directly to the temporal life and death, and only to them. Whatever is worth doing at all, should be well and faithfully and thoroughly done. The failures occurring in the legitimate pursuits of life, resulting solely from the unprofitableness thereof, are few and far between. The vast majority of failures are the results of neglect, or of want of careful attention, or of ignorance, or of dishonesty on the part of the applicants, and not of the business itself.

Carefully select your occupation with a view to your qualifications or adaptability therefor; let it be worthy of the noblest ambition and purest desire, and then engage in it in earnest, put your heart into it, and your mind upon it, with due consideration to other essential things, until you

succeed. All extremes should be avoided. To fix the heart and mind upon a single object, however good, and close the eyes to all else in life, may make an expert, a bigot, or a crank, but never a wise and broad-minded man. It is foolish to become too much absorbed in material things. Labor and relaxation should go hand in hand, and pure and undefiled religion will lighten every burden you have to bear, and help to sweeten the bitter draught of many a sorrowing soul. The proper admixture of labor and leisure will not only promote the highest mental capabilities, but also the most perfect physical conditions.

Man is a dual being. He is spiritual and he is physical. The latter is dependent upon the former for intelligence and life. The body without the spirit is dead, but the spirit is an immortal and an independent principle and being. It is the more important part, yet man bestows more thought and labor upon the body, as a rule, than upon the better part. Neither should be neglected, least of all, the spiritual. This is truth, and it is the truth that makes man free. By it they stand, without it they fall.

The Great Teacher of the world has said, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:31-2.) Again: "And truth is knowledge of things as they are, and as they were, and as they are to come." (Doc. and Cov. 93:24.)

This knowledge of truth, combined with proper regard for it, and its faithful observance, constitutes true education. The mere stuffing of the mind with a knowledge of facts is not education. The mind must not only possess a knowledge of truth, but the soul must revere it, cherish it, love it as a priceless gem; and this human life must be guided and shaped by it in order to fulfil its destiny. The mind should not only be charged with intelligence, but the soul should be filled with admiration and desire for pure intelli-

gence which comes of a knowledge of the truth. The truth can only make him free who hath it, and will continue in it. And the word of God is truth, and it will endure forever.

Educate yourself not only for time, but also for eternity. The latter of the two is the more important. Therefore, when we shall have completed the studies of time, and enter upon the commencement ceremonies of the great hereafter, we will find our work is not finished, but just begun, we may then say with the poet:

“Lay this aside—say not your work is done,
 No need of love or goodness ever diès,
 But in the lives of others multiplies,
 Say it has just begun.”

In conclusion permit me to repeat a portion of the first psalm; “Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away.”—*Contributor*, Vol. 16, pp. 569-671. Delivered at the commencement exercises of the Latter-day Saints College, Salt Lake City, June 5, 1895.

OUR MAIN PURPOSE OF LIFE. The important consideration is not how long we can live but how well we can learn the lessons of life, and discharge our duties and obligations to God and to each other. One of the main purposes of our existence is that we might conform to the image and likeness of him who sojourned in the flesh without blemish—immaculate, pure, and spotless! Christ came not only to atone for the sins of the world, but to set an example before all men and to establish the standard of God’s

perfection, of God's law, and of obedience to the Father.—*Improvement Era*, Vol. 21, p. 104, December, 1917.

HOW TO LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR. Love your neighbor as yourself? How are you to do it? If your neighbor is in danger, protect him to the utmost of your power. If you see your neighbor's property in danger of injury, protect his property as you would your own, as far as it lies in your power. If your neighbor's boy or girl is going astray, go directly to your neighbor, in the spirit of love, and help him to reclaim his child. How are we to love our neighbor as we love ourselves? It is the simplest thing in the world; but too many people are selfish and narrow and not given to that breadth of feeling which reaches out and considers the benefit and welfare of their neighbors; and they narrow themselves down to their own peculiar and particular benefit and blessing and well being, and feel to say: "O, let my neighbor take care of himself." That is not the spirit that should characterize a Latter-day Saint.—*Improvement Era*, Vol. 21, pp. 103, 104, December, 1917.

QUESTION OF CHURCH LEADERS. We have come to ask you if you are in strict accord with the two great commandments: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, * * * and thy neighbor as thyself."—*Improvement Era*, Vol. 21, p. 98, December, 1917; Matt. 22:34-40.

THE SIN OF INGRATITUDE. And I believe that one of the greatest sins of which the inhabitants of the earth are guilty today is the sin of ingratitude, the want of acknowledgment, on their part, of God and his right to govern and control. We see a man raised up with extraordinary gifts, or with great intelligence, and he is instrumental in developing some great principle. He and the world ascribe his great genius and wisdom to himself. He attributes his success to his own energies, labor and mental capacity. He does not acknowledge the hand of God in anything con-

nected with his success, but ignores him altogether and takes the honor to himself; this will apply to almost all the world. In all the great modern discoveries in science, in the arts, in mechanics, and in all the material advancement of the age, the world say, "We have done it." The individual says, "I have done it," and he gives no honor or credit to God. Now, I read in the revelations through Joseph Smith, the prophet, that because of this, God is not pleased with the inhabitants of the earth, but is angry with them because they will not acknowledge his hand in all things.—*Deseret Weekly News*, 1884, Vol. 33, p. 130; Doc. and Cov. 59:21.